

Silver Spring Urban District Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2006

Members Present: Charles Atwell, Tom Collins, Bryant Foulger, Genny Hardesty, Barbara Henry, Bob Middleton, and Anne Miller

Members Absent: Edward Baca-Asher

Guest: Mitch Cunningham, Jan Goldstein, Bryon Peck

Staff: Gary Stith, Vicki Lockerman, Susan Hoffmann, Jerry Sanford

Welcome/Introductions – Tom Collins, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Minutes: [Middleton, Hardesty] the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee approved the April 2006 minutes as amended on page 5, 5th paragraph (use Urban Land Institute and Park and Planning) and on page 8, 5th paragraph change west side to east side in the last line.

Chairs Report

Tom Collins reported that:

- SilverDocs starts on June 15 through Saturday June 17
- Silver SpringGrand Prix will be on Sunday, June 18, 8 a.m.-2:00 p.m. in downtown Silver Spring. This will be the 2nd year for this event
- Farmers Market is going on every Saturday 9am-1pm
- Peterson Management is having concert every other Saturday
- Silver Spring Swings Summer Concert Series will start on June 8th
- Urban District Advisory Committee had a conference call to discuss Expedited Bill 18-06. I testified on Tuesday before County Council and expressed our desire to see the Council not vote for this bill and at the time of the meeting Council decided not to expedite Bill 18-06.

Bob Middleton asked if others were against the bill that attended the meeting with Council

Tom Collins responded that the Bethesda Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce, and the County Executive Office, were against the Bill. Someone from the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee did not exactly speak against the Bill but were not entirely for it either.

- Silver Spring still has pedestrian issues and we need to look at Fenwick Lane & Georgia Avenue and perhaps putting in a crosswalk. You can see people in the median and crossing dangerously. Another area is Whole Foods and Fenton where it is natural to walk across because it is between two traffic lights and a long walk to the traffic signals.
- Rick Siebert recently gave the Committee a presentation on the Parking Demand Assessment Study in South Silver Spring and yesterday in the Gazette there was an article about problems parking in South Silver. In the Parking Assessment the Department Public

Works and Transportation believes that there will be enough parking in South Silver Spring after all is done and when you look at the numbers that it what is reflected. Particle experience and common sense suggest that the study is incorrect. If you read the parking assessment they count the NOAA Garage as being in South Silver Spring so spaces available there would count toward parking available in South Silver Spring. I submit to the Committee that is not South Silver Spring but more CBD. Hopefully the Committee will have an opportunity to offer our opinion on the parking assessment that was presented to us at a future meeting.

- The Committee will elect new officers at the June meeting for next year.
- City Place was on the meeting agenda today and cancelled. We will try again to have City Place at the Committees July meeting.

Motion: (Atwell, Hardesty) that Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee request DPWT to study the two intersections for pedestrian improvement.

Discussion

Bob Middleton stated that the Committee has reviewed this issue twice and I think Gary Stith can share with us what DPWT position is. Bryant Foulger talked about the Whole Foods area and explained that they wanted to put a crosswalk in initially in the original plan. I raised a question when I was Vice–Chair and DPWT Staff attended the meeting and gave a response which I did not understand. Is there anything different now that would lead the Committee to believe we could move the issue further?

Charles Atwell stated that the Committee had talked about the paddle signs they put in the middle of crosswalks but we have yet to see them at Roeder and Fenton and I don't know how it slip through the cracks but it never happened. I think it was more "let's see how it goes" and we never really got a satisfactory conclusion. In asking DPWT to study those two areas perhaps we can ask Sgt. Harmon for his observation as well?

Bob Middleton stated that perhaps the Committee could take another approach rather than just asking DPWT which is the group that would handle it anyway we need to bring some pressure and write a spirited letter.

Charles Atwell accepted a friendly amendment to his original motion

Motion: (Atwell, Hardesty) the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee agreed to the amendment to write a spirited letter to the County Executive Office to direct DPWT to put in crosswalks specifically in these two areas Fenwick and Georgia Avenue and Whole Foods and Fenton. *Charles Atwell withdrew the motion.*

Motion: (Atwell, Hardesty) that the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee unanimously agreed to send a letter to the County Executive requesting that he direct Department Public Works and Transportation to implement a pedestrian crossing at Fenton Street and Whole Foods.

Motion: (Atwell, Miller) that the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee unanimously agreed to send a spirited letter to the Director, Department Public Works and Transportation asking the he request the State to study Fenwick and Georgia Avenue with the appropriate background.

Charles Atwell asked Tom Collins about his comments on South Silver Spring Parking Analysis and pointed out that if the Committee does not voice there concerns about the NOAA parking garage being included in a spirited way now it will be more difficult to have the analysis revised.

Tom Collins stated that Rick Siebert will be on the June agenda and the Committee will have an opportunity at the meeting to specifically discuss the Parking Assessment that was presented to us and address our concerns.

Police Update

Mitch Cunningham reported:

- May 31- June1, there will be a protest on East West Highway in front of the NOAA Building. This group is concerned with environmental issues, and concerns relating to failure as they perceive it by NOAA relating to Hurricane Katrina.
- Thanks to Bryant Foulger and Rob Parker for helping get an agency letter in place so we now have the ability to trespass people not only at City Place but Peterson Property.
- Efforts have shifted toward South Silver Spring we have a proactive police team down to South Silver Spring because of concern about perception and problems associated with the hotels in that area. We acknowledge the fact that there will be approximately 3,000 new housing units and there will be increased demand for service in that area and we will adjust our deployment and patrol. We have been working with David Fogel and others and they are doing a good job of keeping things organize citizens and homeowner groups.
- Thanks to the Urban District staff on helping fix the lighting problems throughout downtown.
- There have been a couple of robberies in the CBD and our Officers have made an arrest. We associated these offenders with housing developments located along 16th street. The officers did a good job. However there is a group that has been hitting in and around the Piney Branch Area and committed several robberies. There have been two occasions and in one case someone was shot over in Piney Branch and a homicide in Takoma Park. The investigation is moving forward.
- The Officer in Fairfax County passed away in the line of duty in a shooting at a Police substation. Our Department has started a series of site surveys of police facilities to determine vulnerabilities.

Bryant Foulger stated that Mitch Cunningham had mentioned 3,000 units over the next eighteen months and I don't think we will deliver that many. I think there is about 3,000 plus in planning and various stages of approvals but I don't know how many are under construction at this time but the 3,000 is probably a 4 to 5 year number. In the next year the Crescent has 200 units. The JBG project, the Gateway, is approximately 400 to 500 units and the Silverton is probably 600 to 650 units over the next year.

Barbara Henry stated that if RST does not deliver that building this would mean the 200 spaces that are suppose to be supplied in South Silver Spring will not be delivered until that building is fill which brings up another issue for parking in South Silver Spring.

Tom Collins stated not only do the number not add up because they included the NOAA Building but also timing is a real factor.

Gary Stith stated frankly financial capacity of the parking lot district is a concern that needs to be addressed.

Tom Collins stated that this is another issue we wanted to discuss with Rick Siebert, the PLD, and the deficit.

Arts on the Blocks

Jan Goldstein, Director Arts on the Block and Byron Peck from City Arts reported that:

- Arts on the Block unveiled the design of its first venture into the world of public art -- a permanent paint and mosaic piece along the pedestrian lanes of the Georgia Avenue- Blair Mill Road underpass.
- Leading the project is muralist/mosaic artist G. Byron Peck, whose works include the Duke Ellington/U Street and Metro Center station murals. Byron worked with the talents of 25 Montgomery County high school artists to create the artwork and Arts on the Block artist Carien Quiroga also contributed to the project.
- Eleven of the young artists are students at Montgomery Blair High School, while the other artists are enrolled at Bethesda-Chevy Chase, Springbrook, Wheaton, and John F. Kennedy High Schools.
- Arts on the Block is a great way for high school-aged youth in Montgomery County, Maryland to learn about and connect through the arts. It's an on-the-job training experience that uses the arts as a vehicle to teach young people about the world of work. The program provides meaningful employment and high quality on-the-job training through the visual, performing, literary and media arts. In addition, Arts on the Block provides professional mentoring, increases public awareness of the importance of the arts and arts education, enriches the quality of life for the community and contributes to its economic vitality. The program also supplements and builds upon the learning objectives of Montgomery County Public Schools by strengthening social skills, building self confidence, and developing problem solving, reasoning and decision-making skills.
- The original funding for the design of this project came through a \$25,000 Community Empowerment grant from the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs, a \$15,000 grant from the Silver Spring Urban District, and other partners including the JBG Companies, the Carl M. Freeman Foundation, The Women's Giving Circle of the Montgomery County Community Foundation, and the Takoma Foundation. In addition, Arts on the Block was awarded \$30,000 in state of Maryland Community Investment Tax Credits. Businesses and individuals can reclaim 50 percent and more of their contributions to the project through the tax credit program that can be applied to later phases of the project. The artists' studio for the creation of the mosaic is being provided by Social and Scientific Systems of Silver Spring.

- Phase two and three as you see we only had the resources to do what was under the tunnel but to really make it a Gateway we want to duplicate some upper level visual activity. There are several indented areas that are perfect for a replication of the design concept. We need to raise money and hopefully get enough resources to do the upper level pieces which will be as you approach from the South and coming from the North we will have two new pieces because two of the panels really face the highway coming and going.
- The cost so far is \$85,000 and to complete it would be estimated another \$85,000. We do a maintenance evaluation so we can either advise or do it directly.

Urban District Report:

Jerry Sanford reported that:

- Urban District and Chamber will be hosting an afterhours on May 24, at 5:30 p.m. at the New Fire Station located at 8110 Georgia Avenue. A tour of the entire facility will be done as well.
- The informational kiosk is very successful. We are providing people that stop by with all of the promotional materials available and the Kiosk is the most. Successful at Georgia and Colesville, Colesville and East West Highway and the Green Space. We will be using the kiosk throughout the summer and are looking at perhaps making several others to put in different locations. This will be an integral part of the transition during interim operations for the transit center.
- Urban District Staff have started a 10 week survival Spanish training class.
- Silver Spring Swings Summer Concert Series begins, Thursday, June 8 and Peterson Management has concerts on Saturday evening .

Discussion

Tom Collins stated that the kiosk in relation to the transit center when it closes down will be helpful in that area in addition to other things begin done to spread information. Tom Collins asked Jerry Sanford if there would be more Urban District staff on weekend nights down in SOPO now that there is more activity in the area and another concern is weekend mornings and full trash cans, what type of deployment do you have on tap to kind of mitigate overflowing trash receptacles around the project.

Jerry Sanford responded that one logistical change the Urban District has implemented about eighteen months ago was to provide services seven days a week. 6 a.m. to midnight even if we have a small skeleton maintenance crew we do have services so that we won't have overflowing trash cans and litter problems. The current hours should be sufficient without having to go to an overnight shift and we are doing a satisfactory job up until midnight. Our primary focus for the maintenance staff and supervisor is to identify any trouble problems and dealing with those before people are out and about. If there has been an issue between that gap when we are not here between midnight and 6:00 a.m. we have dealt with it by 7:00 a.m.

Barbara Henry stated that Tom Collins raised the specter of the transit center and the interim operations facilities and Jerry and Mitch it would be nice in early fall to have discussion on how we will deploy the Urban District and Police not only immediately as we enter into the process of getting people to move over but also during the construction phase. Also Mitch I don't know if

anyone from DPWT has talked to you about looking at the security issues around the move and if you are not in the mix you definitely need to be now because people are talking about allocating dollars for all kinds of things. Discovery has been having a lot of conversation in-house about what our response is going to be since the land is literally at our door step and so far I have not heard any comments about the Police looking over the plan.

Mitch Cunningham stated the Police have expressed a strong desire to be involved and I am sure Gary Stith will hear of those meeting and keep us informed.

Jerry Sanford stated that County Council approved the Urban District to have eight additional temporary staff to assist with the additional pressures that will be placed on the surrounding area during the construction phase starting April 2007. The eight temporary staff will cover four shifts which is essentially an additional two people per shift and will be exclusively for that area.

Bryant Foulger commented that we have stepped up our cleaning and maintenance efforts and are pleased with how things look both on the private side and public sector side.

Charles Atwell suggested to Jerry Sanford that he come back to the Committee and do a similar active giving the Committee a sense on a CBD map of how you deploy your staff particularly safety, the protocols utilized with your supervisors versus team members and the protocol with the Optional Method Developers which you have relationships with and are essentially under contract with to render certain services. This would help the committee better understand who they are, what the relationship is and the reimbursement to the Urban District. Visibility is the key throughout the entire CBD. One concern was Ellsworth and that street would receive all the attention and that South Silver Spring and other parts would not get the same level of attention.

Bryant Foulger stated that they are trying to do some training and make our staff that have contact with customers and clients more aware and sensitive to customer service.

Tom Collins stated that County Executive had a ceremony at Montgomery Hills about bringing down the Clear Channel billboards and Clear Channel was going to put up new bus shelters with there ads in them. I have recently noticed that there are a lot of bus shelters up with there ads but the billboards are still up. When is Clear Channel going to remove the billboards

Gary Stith responded that there is a schedule over time that they have to meet and some are to come down this month and some more later this summer and they get to select which ones come down but they have to follow the schedule.

Action:

Gary Stith stated that he will get the Clear Channel schedule for removal of billboards for the Silver Spring Urban District Committee

Civic Building Design Update

Gary Stith gave an updated power point presentation on the Civic Building as follows:

- There will be a public meeting July 12, at the Black Box Theatre and the plans are to be submitted to Park and Planning in September. Construction will start Jan. 07. The layout of the building has not changed since the last presentation.
- We have been focusing more on the civic building and pavillion. We had a meeting with Foulger Pratt and the Petersons Company about where we can site this pavillion. The code requires the pavillion be a certain distance away from the property line and we could get a waiver as long as the property adjacent agrees. We work with them as to where the appropriate location and we have come to an agreement of where item C should be. We look at several options and the modified middle option works and allows us to be tucked back to there building and more open field to the plaza area.
- We have done some layouts of different ways we can use the space. One configuration is where the stage its set up on the side of the rink area and the skate house is behind and underneath the Section A building retail space. The floor area of skating rink under the pavillion is about 7,000 square feet which is considerably larger than the Great Hall and will accommodate a lot of people if we set-up seats for theatre seating.

Q&A

Bryant Foulger asked if the budget included the seats for the outdoor area?

Gary Stith responded that the budget does not include the seats and we are not going to buy seats that we can set-up out there so it is somewhat misleading to have the layout like this. We will have platform stages that will be a part of our equipment.

Charles Atwell asked what material are the chairs on

Gary Stith responded that the material is concerte.

- Another configuration would place the stage under the portico which would provide some shelter on the stage and we could have a screen there and show movies. For the larger events like the Jazz Festival we would set the stage up in the portico and that would give us the entire field of the plaza to use.
- As we do the design there will be deterrence to skateboarders like notches in the steps and we are very sensitive about this even though I think we still need a skateboard park.
- We are still working on the exterior façade materials. We were looking at a hard wood material that is very durable. In order to maintain it as brown you would have to seal and oil it on a regular basis and our concern is whether the County would be able to maintain it at that level. The architect is deciding what the building looks like and the County has the final approval.

Charles Atwell asked what the public involvement was in terms of providing feedback to the County.

Gary Stith stated he made a presentation to the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board Commercial & Economic Committee this week and on a monthly basis the stakeholders meet with us and the design team. The stakeholders are Bryant Foulger, Round House, Jon Lourie, Theresa Cameron, Wanda Whiteside and Pete Esker who have been involved and all four were on the Civic Building Task Force

Tom Collins stated that what would be useful would be rendering in the context of the buildings around the Civic Building and what Ellsworth would look like because at this point it seems this building will look out of place you have the Majestic, the parking garages which is a lot of brick.

Gary Stith stated that because of the civic nature of this place they want this building to become the focus of the space and not duplicate or replicate the buildings around it.

Tom Collins stated that he was not suggestion that but you don't want it to look like it dropped in out of a space ship type of deal. When they do rendering would it not be good to see it in the context of the buildings that are around it to.

Bryant Foulger agreed and stated that elevation are about the most misleading drawings you will ever see because you never see the building the way it is depicted so getting rendering and what they can do is very impressive.

Charles Atwell asked the distance between the civic building and your parking lot, the Whole Food parking lot there are trees and grass. On the south side of the building

Bryant Foulger stated that there is a retaining wall and I don't think it is more than 20 feet.

Tom Collins asked if the building would be as tall as the garage which is 7 stories.

Bryant Foulger responded the building would be sit a little higher probably to the 4th or 5th floor The Ellsworth is four stories. It four stories from the corner of Pershing and Veterans and Pershing and Cedar and will probably appear to be 5 ½ stories at the corner of Cedar and Ellsworth.

Marketing and Special Events

Gary Stith reported on behalf of Susan Hoffmann that

- We had an Arts Alley Community Day in South Silver Spring on April 23rd.
- Farmers Market has started and will be every Saturday.
- The Artist Market will be the 2nd Saturday of each month.
- The new website www.silverspringdowntown.com has a listing of all the events.

Q&A

Charles Atwell asked if someone is sitting on Ellsworth Drive and log-in onto the WIFI does the www.silverspringdowntown.com appear?

Gary Stith stated the WIFI screen appears and on there is Silver Spring logo and a link to our website.

Charles Atwell asked Tom Collins for a demo over on Ellsworth of the WIFI.

Tom Collins mentioned that the Silver Spring Marketing Team was approached by the Washington Post regarding putting together a Silver Spring Restaurant Week in the fall. J. Nicely

from Eggspectations will be joining the Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce Board for the next year and perhaps the Chamber could participate in helping put the Restaurant Week together.

- Gary Stith handed out a report to the Committee that describes the session we receive on our website and we are averaging about 400 per day. We are also looking at doing some more marketing of the new website by putting ads in the Gazette, and perhaps designing a bookmark to handout to the library and businesses, and doing a banner over the Kiosk with the website indicated.

Director Report

Gary Stith reported that:

- As a part of Silver Docs Discovery and AFI they are doing a large version of the SilverDocs poster this year and it is President Abe Lincoln sitting in the audience of the theatre and the poster reads *"Independent Thinkers' Welcome"*. We are putting this up through an MOU between the County and Discovery and becomes a County sponsored sign and therefore not restricted by County sign regulations
- Barbara Henry stated that the poster will cover the entire front window of the Discovery building on the curved wall facing Wayne and Georgia.
- We have worked with Discovery and come up with an amendment to the sign regulations that will allow these types of things to be done without having to make it a County event. We are working on the ordinance. The ordinance states that for any Urban Renewal area within an Arts and Entertainment District there are temporary signs that are allowed and exempt from certain provisions of the sign ordinance including the size limitations and that we can't do a sign in the shape of an animal and a few other things. They can get a permit from DPS to put this on the building within the area which includes Discovery, AFI and Round House, City Place, Civic Building and two garages so that is the only place in the County you will be able to do this. The idea is to allow for these things to liven the Arts and Entertainment District by promoting things that Discovery, AFI and any other kind of event and this ordinance would allow that to happen and these are temporary signs. These things are relatively expensive. This ordinance is being introduced by County Council members and I have discussed this with the CED Committee they are interested, but will wait and see what happens.

Barbara Henry stated that she called Tom Perez today and he has the first right of refusal. I will know tomorrow whether he will or will not introduced it and if he is not Mike Knapp has graciously offered. The challenge is in order for it to get passed in time for Shark Week it has to get through Council which means five votes and through Parking and Planning and there is public hearing at each place. We are going to pursue this because what happens with the Sign Board is it takes between six months and two years to get something approved and by the time this happens we are six months to two years beyond what we asked to have done. The County has been really wonderful about it and helped us write the language and get it all together. The potential for positive economic impact to do something like the shark on the building is huge.

- Gary Stith stated that he just wanted to the Committee to be aware of the issue and more than likely we will eventually ask the Committee for a letter of support once this is introduced.

- We met with the local staff of ULI and have an agreement and scheduled a panel for September 26 and 27th. We have to compile a briefing book for them with background information so the people participating receive it two weeks in advance and they will bring in a panel of seven to ten people for two days. The Committee will be asked to participate in the process and they will make a presentation and give a final written report. The cost is \$12,000.00. They asked that we narrow the issues down to three or four questions. The questions I came up with are:
 - a) How do you retain small retail businesses in a changing retail environment?
 - b) How do we attract more retail into downtown Silver Spring both with working with developer to accommodate them and attract them here?
 - c) What to do about City Place and looking at what kinds of potential it has and help turn City Place around.

Charles Atwell stated that the Committee had talked about South Silver Spring and the amount of residential that will occur there and the lack of retail that will occur. Will they give this in the context of the specific geographical areas?

Gary Stith responded yes they will give them a very detail description of what is going on here, changes that have occurred, what's going on in retail, how much retail we have, types of projects coming on-line and whether they include or don't include retail and what to do with it and information on zoning.

Bryant Foulger stated that he would like recommendations from them about what changes we should be making to our zoning or at least what provisions should we be providing in our zoning that facilitate and really support these types of things.

Gary Stith asked the Committee to think about this and he would e-mail the three questions.

Charles Atwell asked that the questions be e-mail and maybe whatever they give you to construct it.

Gary Stith stated he would e-mail the information on the process and schedule to the Committee.

Bryant Foulger indicated that he was on a panel like this at Landover Mall and talked to Tom Lavashe one of the co-panelist that does market research and analyses and felt very good about the product we came up with. The Planning Board was not as wild about the product. It became clearer as Tom gave an explanation about the disconnect between the expected result and the deliverable. I think it would be good to manage everyone's expectation. It might be good have Doug Wrenn or somebody from ULI brief this group so we are all on the same page as far as the process, what they expect from us and what we hope the deliverables to be when completed.

Gary Stith stated that Doug Wrenn is the Chair of the Committee that runs these panels and was at the meeting we recently had. We will involve Park and Planning and Chamber because we want the stakeholders to participate in this process. We will be using Park and Planning to help us put together the briefing because they have a lot of good data.

- There is a topping out for the Crescent which is the new hi-rise condominium on May 25th
- We continue to meet with the developer and businesses every other week to discuss the parking in South Silver Spring around Maygora to make adjustment and do what we can to make it work. The real emphasis is on public education and they have sent 28,000 flyers as insert in the Gazette and Voice and the businesses all have copies of the flyers and posters. Also on our website www.silverspringdowntown.com there is information and links to each of the businesses pages on the website and there is information on where to park, valet service and the shuttle. I think JGB is making every effort to make this work.
- Parking and Planning as of May 1 is now requiring that before somebody submits to Park and Planning they must go out and make a public presentation about there project.
- Hillerson is having a meeting on May 24 to show develop plans on his property around Lot 3.
- Office Tower over City Place. When the plan for City Place was approved in 1990 it included a Office Tower above it and an entrance off Colesville where the entrance is for Gold's Gym. What happened in 1990 expired and now they have to go through entire process again.

5:30 p.m. meeting adjourned